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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MEXICO 006005

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

PASS TO WHA/CCA
WHA/MEX FOR LIZ WOLFSON

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [PREL](#) [CU](#) [MX](#)
SUBJECT: MEXICO REVIEW FOR SUSPENSION OF TITLE III OF
LIBERTAD ACT

REF: STATE 158768

Summary

1. (U) Post supports continued waiver of Title III provisions of the Libertad Act for Mexico. The Government of Mexico (GOM) is optimistic that a debt settlement with Cuba will be reached in the near future. There are small exchange programs between the two countries. Mexico continues to promote respect for human rights in Cuba and in the region as President Calderon seeks to strengthen his government's relationship with Cuba. Mexico's and Cuba's Foreign Secretaries have discussed a possible reciprocal visit. End

SIPDIS
Summary

Mexican Investment in Cuba

2. (SBU) Mexican investment in Cuba is principally geared towards the agricultural and food sectors, the tourism sector, and the construction sector. The Havana branch of the Mexican International Development Bank, BANCOMEXT, has been closed since 2005. The Bank of Cuba and other entities still have approximately 500 million USD in outstanding Mexican debt. Mexico's new Ambassador to Cuba, Enrique Gabriel Jimenez Remus, has stated that there will be ongoing negotiations during December in hopes of reaching a debt settlement before the end of 2007.

Bilateral Trade Agreements

3. (U) In July 2002 Mexico and Cuba entered into a Complementary Economic Agreement (ACE-51). ACE's are similar to Free Trade Agreements, but only include some sectors. In 2001, Mexico and Cuba signed an Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (APRI). Both Mexico and Cuba are also members of the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI). No new agreements have been signed in recent years.

Exchange Programs Between Mexico and Cuba

4. (SBU) According to Ricardo Dominguez, the Secretariat of Foreign Relations (SRE) Director for Cuban, Haitian and Dominican affairs, the governments of Mexico and Cuba have several student exchange programs at the post-graduate level. Medical travel to Cuba is usually paid for by individual travelers. From time to time, groups of Cuban teachers work on literacy programs in marginalized areas of Mexico.

Promoting Democracy and Human Rights in Cuba

15. (SBU) GOM officials continue to insist that Mexico prefers to use multilateral fora to discuss human rights issues with Cuba (or other countries), rather than engage the GOC one-on-one. The Mexican Embassy in Cuba eschews engaging with Cuban dissidents on human rights which it believes could be construed as interference in Cuba's internal affairs. Nevertheless, we do not expect Calderon's administration to overlook the issue of human rights on the island. Shortly before assuming office, Foreign Secretary Espinosa acknowledged that Cuba suffered from "a difficult human rights situation and that there are problems that should be addressed, which explains why this subject is brought before international fora."

Diplomatic Visits

16. (SBU) Since the August 10, 2005 appointment of Jose Ignacio Pina Rojas as Mexico's Ambassador to Cuba, Mexico has had an Ambassador resident in Havana. There have been no ministerial level visits to Cuba in the past six months. According to Ricardo Dominguez, the Secretariat of Foreign Relations (SRE) Director for Cuban, Haitian and Dominican affairs, the Secretary of Health is planning a visit within the next few months.

17. (SBU) President Felipe Calderon has said that he will seek a more constructive and less confrontational relationship with Cuba than prevailed under the Fox administration. Foreign Secretary Patricia Espinosa met with her Cuban counterpart, Felipe Perez Roque on the periphery of the 2007 United Nations General Assembly meeting in New York. They

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discussed, among other things, an interest in a future reciprocal visit by the respective Foreign Secretaries.

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